

Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Community Review

SPRING 2007
Volume 4, Number 2

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services



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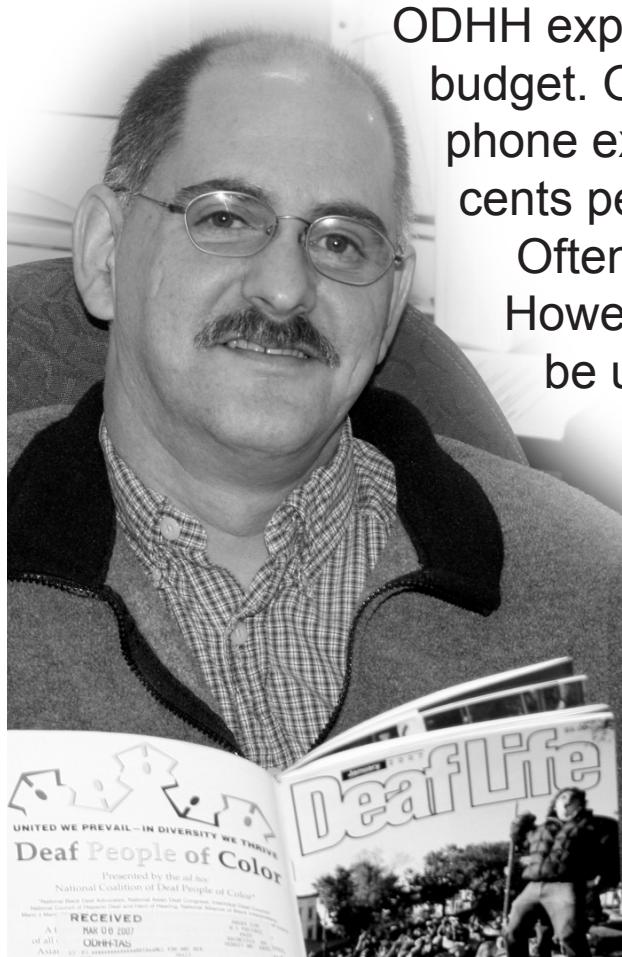
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Message from the Director

Eric Raff, Director ODHHS

Most state agencies get state funding from sales and property taxes through the Governor and legislative process and prepare a budget every two years (biennium). However ODHHS funding and budget process is different. ODHHS manages funds on a fiscal year (FY) basis, from July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007 (FY07). The law establishing ODHHS explains the process to approve the annual budget. ODHHS is funded through a monthly telephone excise tax or “surcharge”, currently .09 cents per telephone landline.

Often, I get requests to fund certain needs. However, the law explains what the funds can be used for. ODHHS is allowed to budget for programs and services related to telecommunications such as relay services and equipment distribution. Additionally, ODHHS can spend where it would assist the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to be accessible to people with hearing loss.

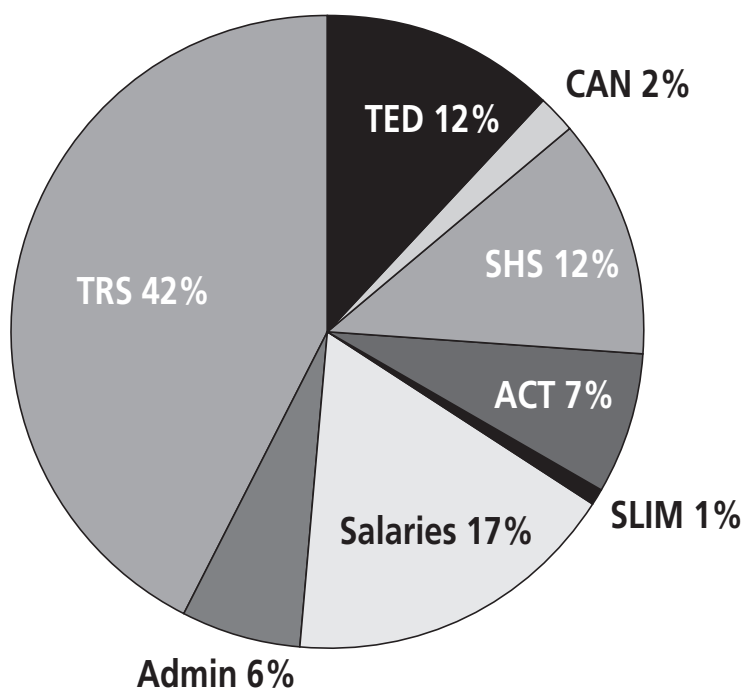


ODHH also has authority with limited funds for the regional service centers (nonprofits) to provide local communities with services.

As Director, I make sure the funds are spent in accordance to the law & policy and relate it to the costs of implementing and maintaining strategic goals identified in the ODHH strategic plan. I consult with the program managers and identify, review and prioritize their budgets for FY08 strategies. I make sure the strategies are realistic and achievable within their workload.

The FY08 budget describes where ODHH is proposing to spend public funds, distributed to various ODHH programs in accordance to the strategic goals. See the chart in this newsletter. Beginning last November 2007, ODHH started drafting the FY08 budget. The budget process requires a thorough review by ODHH advisory committee, DSHS management, Office of Financial Management, Department of Revenue and Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission. It is completed by May 1st.

FY08 Budget



Salaries & Benefits
Administration
TRS - Telecommunication
Relay Services
TED - Telecommunication
Equipment Distribution
CAN - Communication Access
Network
SHS - Social & Human Services
ACT - Assistive Communication
Technology
SLIM - Sign Language
Interpreter Management

New Customer Service Representative: Jeannie Kay

If you see a new face at ODHH, it is just me, the new Customer Service Representative. As the first person you may encounter from ODHH, I am excited to provide assistance to those calling or visiting. A large portion of my responsibilities involve providing office support regarding policies and procedures for several different programs. I also do the entire inventory and ordering, making sure the office has the equipment and supplies to run effectively. It is exciting for me to be working with people that are dedicated in serving the Deaf Community.



I have worked as an interpreter for over 12 years in the South Seattle area. In 1995, I graduated from Seattle Central Community College in the ITP program. Many Seattle people would remember me by my former name of Jeannie Jameson. The past few years, I also worked at a funeral home and cemetery, as a family service professional. I had many opportunities to work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing, helping them at a very sad time in their families' lives. I was thrilled to serve in that capacity when many other funeral homes would not have made the accommodations.

My personal time is spent with my sweetheart, Richard. I have 3 grown children and one very loved grand-daughter. On a sunny day, you will find me working on my 5 acres in Centralia. Should the weather be raining, I will be busy working on my latest quilt!

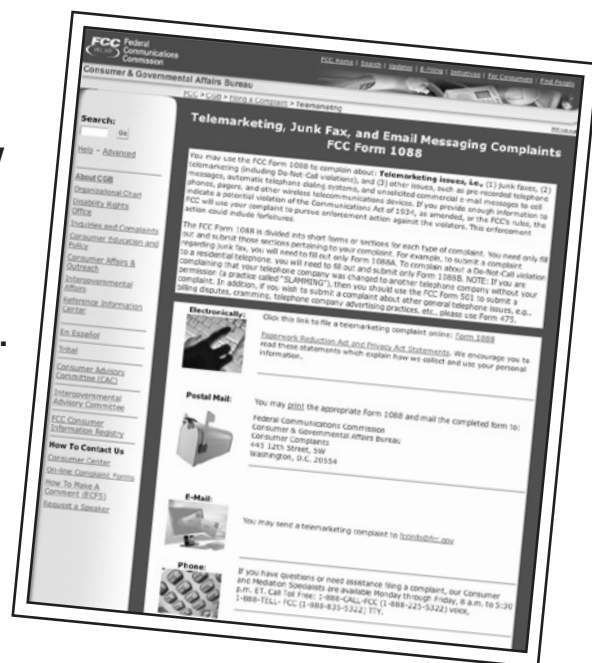
Important New Information on FCC Complaint Form 1088

By Steve Peck

Recently the FCC has developed a new easy to use complaint form which can be found at the following web address:
http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints_tcpa.html

You may use the FCC Form 1088 to complain about: Telemarketing issues, i.e., (1) junk faxes, (2) telemarketing (including Do-Not-Call violations), and (3) other issues, such as pre-recorded telephone messages, automatic telephone dialing systems, and unsolicited commercial e-mail messages to cell phones, pagers, and other wireless telecommunications devices. If you provide enough information to indicate a potential violation of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, or the FCC's rules, the FCC will use your complaint to pursue enforcement action against the violators. This enforcement action could include forfeitures.

For more information click on the FCC web address listed above.



Ed's Telecom Alert

By Ed Bosson, Relay Texas (RT) Administrator

Ed's Telecom Alert is a blog and, on occasion, a vlog as well. The name of the blog is www.edsalert.com. Edsalert.com is a personalized web-page that is managed by myself. The sole purpose of edsalert.com is to inform, educate, and, hopefully, empower deaf and hard of hearing persons by providing factual issues or offer alternative analysis of such issues where you can make an intelligent analysis of such topic(s).

I work as Texas' Relay Administrator for the Texas Public Utility Commission. I research and release "alerts" on relay service and other related issues. I also occasionally provide information on non-related issues such as closed captioning, electric service, new technologies, etc. Some of the alerts are about new federal and state rules. (By the way, edsalert.com really is for Texans, but it has expanded nationwide as 90% of alerts are relevant to nationwide issues. Right now the average "hits" to edsalert.com is about 7,250 per month).

The alerts have a brief summary of the topic with a link to the full-blown description of an article or a document. The alert topic summary offers subscribers a quick review of the alert to determine if he/she wants to continue reviewing the issue further by clicking on the link. When you go to edsalert.com, and if you find the blog beneficial, you can subscribe to it. It is fairly simple and self-explanatory. Once you subscribe, you will automatically get posts from edsalert.com. Sometimes there is no news for a while, and other times you may get a lot in one day - it depends on the available news sources. It is equally easy to unsubscribe if you so choose.

One of the things that people like about edsalert.com is the ability to comment on any of these alerts and read what others have to comment on various alerts – from time to time you will see a series of comments about a particular topic. It is interesting to see how they comment.

Eyes open & thumbs up.

Update on Deaf-Blind Project

By Colleen Rozmaryn

Exciting things began happening for ODHHS, Deaf-Blind (DB) and Humanware in Seattle the week of January 29, 2007. That is the week Humanware's engineers traveled from New Zealand and California to meet with the ODHHS Team (two Seattle/Bellevue engineers and me) and our DB Focus Group members.

On the first day, the engineers and project managers discussed the scope of the project to build a better Braille TTY. We agreed on the basic needs we will be working on improving and reviewed the questions Humanware wanted to ask our DB Focus Group.

Ellie Savidge joined us the next day to teach the engineers a crash course on deaf-blindness and the art of disciplined communication using tactile interpreters. With eyes blindfolded the engineers did an exercise of, "What is it?". Ellie passed around a fun assortment of objects for the group to feel. Later, with blindfolds off, they discussed their impressions of the objects. The exercise was very enlightening for them. Ellie also used "vision loss simulation goggles" and gave examples of communication breakdowns during her presentation to teach us not to all talk at the same time; most importantly she taught everyone how to slow down and take turns.

On Wednesday, the DB Focus Group members met the Humanware engineers. Engineers started by asking questions to our DB Focus Group members. Before long, the Focus Group turned the questioning around and started making direct statements, "We want a device that is easy to use," "We want this, and that, and". It was a good way to focus on the needs of users.

Thursday was an interesting day. It became difficult to separate the two groups anymore—they had merged into “one mind”. DB people brought in examples of old equipment they had used in the past. Individual engineers examined the old technology and listened while DB people explained pros and cons. A TeleBraille in face-to-face mode was very popular as a communication tool between the DB people and engineers. It was delightful to see everyone separating into smaller groups to chat about opinions, preferences and goals. One of the engineers spent enough time with a DB person to learn a short ASL sentence, which he proudly showed to me. Humanware obviously sent their very best people to the Seattle meetings.

What a week! We felt from the beginning that Humanware really planned to listen to DB people. There is plenty of information now to get going on the work of developing a new Braille TTY.

The Office of the Insurance Commissioner

Mike Kreidler, Insurance Commissioner

Who are we?

The Office of the Insurance Commissioner was created by the Legislature to protect consumers, regulate insurers and foster a competitive environment for Washington's insurance markets, a \$23 billion industry in 2005

What do we do?

The OIC is responsible for regulating the insurance industry in the public interest. All insurers wanting to conduct business in Washington must meet mandatory financial, legal and other stringent requirements. The agency is also responsible for collecting a premium-based tax levied against insurers, all of which goes into the state's general fund. The tax money collected each year amounts to more than \$209 million.

Anyone selling insurance in Washington must hold a license issued by the Office of Insurance Commissioner. The agency oversees the pre-licensing education, testing, licensing, continuing education and renewal of licensees. OIC staff are responsible for the processing of licenses, background checks, appointments/affiliations, renewals, terminations and certificates for individuals and business entities, both resident and non-resident, who transact insurance business in Washington.

Washington currently has over 86,000 licensees with nearly 390,000 appointments or affiliations. The net number of licensees and appointments/affiliations continues to grow annually. The number of licensees has grown 108% and appointment/affiliations have grown 136% in the last ten years.

In addition to regulating insurance companies and insurance agents and brokers, the OIC provides consumer protection. OIC investigators follow up on consumer complaints, looking into the circumstances of disputes between consumers and companies, and taking the consumer's side whenever companies have acted improperly. OIC staff also respond to thousands of questions from consumers every year.

The agency publishes and distributes consumer guides and fact sheets to help inform Washington State residents about their choices and rights when buying and using health coverage. In addition, the SHIBA HelpLine offers the services of hundreds of trained volunteers statewide for counseling, education and other assistance to consumers with health insurance and health care access issues and questions.

How big is the agency? How is it divided? How is it funded?

The agency has about 200 staff and is divided into three line divisions, with four smaller divisions providing direct support. The line divisions are Company Supervision, Consumer Protection, and Rates & Forms. The support divisions are Operations, Legal Affairs, Executive, and Policy. The agency's operations are funded by a special assessment paid by all insurance companies, based on the amount of business they do in the state.

There are eight Deputy Commissioners. They report to the Chief Deputy Insurance Commissioner, who, in turn, reports to the Commissioner. The Insurance Commissioner is elected by popular vote every four years.

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints, please feel free to contact the OIC.

Contact the Office of the Insurance Commissioner

Consumer Advocacy –

for questions or complaints about your insurance coverage:

Voice:

360-725-7080 or 1-800-562-6900

TDD:

360-586-0241

Fax:

360-586-2018

E-Mail:

CAD@oic.wa.gov

Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) Helpline

– health insurance education, assistance and advocacy for consumers of all ages:

Voice:

1-800-562-6900

TDD:

360-586-0241

Fax:

360-389-2745

Or visit our website at:

www.insurance.wa.gov

Or visit our office at:

5000 Capital Blvd., in Tumwater.

We have staff that can communicate in American Sign Language.

Reprinted from OIC webpages

Wanted: True stories of your experience with disaster

By Donna Platt

Many people were affected by weather-related disasters (flood, wind-storm, power outage, and snow) which happened between November and February.

- Were you affected by it?
- Were you warned ahead of time or during emergency events?
- Did you get the assistance you needed from emergency services programs?
- Were you able to communicate with emergency responders (police, firefighter, shelter worker, others)?

The Washington State 9-1-1/TTY Education Program, operated by the Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center, would like to collect stories, both positive and negative, of Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing people's experiences. The stories will be shared with emergency responders in Washington State because the goal is to educate emergency responders so they can improve communication systems for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing people. Also, if there are enough stories, the 9-1-1/TTY Education Program can share your challenges and solutions with others. Your name is not needed – just include your gender (male or female), age and hearing status (Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or Late Deafened).

Please send your stories to the Washington State 9-1-1/TTY Education Program at one of these following:

Email: dplatt@hsrc.org

Fax: (206) 328-6871

Videophone: (206) 388-1400
or dplatt.hsrc.org

Mail: Washington State 9-1-1/TTY
Education Program
HSDC
1625 19th Ave
Seattle, WA 98122

Let's work together in educating and providing information to our emergency responders in communicating with us so we can receive appropriate information in order to be safe before, during and after disaster events.

EMERGENCY? HOW PREPARE? ME DO-DO?

Submitted by Donna Platt,

*Washington State 9-1-1/TTY Education Program, a program of
Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center*

Everyone is worried about not being informed when an emergency happens. It can be an earthquake, flood, windstorm, fire, chemical spill, terrorist attack or others. How can we prepare ourselves ahead of time? What can we do when it happens? With more practice and planning, we will know what to do when a real disaster happens. There are several things you can do now:

Develop an Evacuation Plan (what to do if the emergency happens, where to go, who to contact).

Set up a Buddy System.

a) Home – Talk with your family members and/or friends. Review plans (what to do and where to go) and agree to check in with each other when the emergency warning happens and/or after the emergency disaster happens. It can be via face to face, TTY, or email. Also, check with your neighborhood crime watch captain or someone in your neighborhood (apartment or house) and let them know that you would appreciate them checking in with you.

b) Work – Discuss emergency plans with your supervisor and co-workers. Be sure to have some kind of warning signal (flashing light, pager, message sent to your computer) and someone to get your attention when the emergency arises.

Get Emergency Preparedness Training. Check with your local emergency management agency, local Red Cross, or local CERT (Community Emergency Response Training) for dates and information. The training will help you to be more prepared and to know what to do before, during and after the disaster. You can check their

websites for information on how to prepare yourself. Also you can get a copy of Preparing Makes Sense. Get Ready Now brochure via 1 800-464-6161 TTY, 1-800-237-3239 V or www.ready.gov .

Prepare for 3 days or more.

- Water – 1 gallon/day/person
- Food – dry, can, powder
- Food for pets
- Can opener (not electric)
- Clothes for warmth and rain
- Flashlight & extra batteries
- First Aid Kit
- Fire extinguisher
- Medications and prescription slips
- Extra glasses
- Extra hearing aids with batteries
- Paper and pen
- Money
- Important papers
- Feminine products
- Other personal items

Find out how you can receive warnings or check for information

- Watch TV or listen to AM/FM radio for news
- Weather radio with strobe light or vibrator
- Subscribe to receive alerts sent to your text pager and/or email
 - Emergency Email Network (free) - <http://www.emergency-email.org/>
 - Regional Public Information Network (RPIN) for King, Snohomish and Pierce counties (free) - <http://www.rpin.org/rpin-web/>

- King County Public Health's Email Alerts - <http://www.metrokc.gov/health/about/subscriptions.htm>
- Weather Channel Notify (cost) - <http://www.weather.com/services/notify.html>
- Your TV Station – check their websites to subscribe to severe weather alerts and/or breaking news
- Add a weather alert program to your computer screen
 - Weather Bug - <http://www.weatherbug.com/>
 - Weather Channel - <http://www.weather.com/services/desktop.html?from=homewxanywhere>
 - Your TV Station – check their websites to download weather alerts
- Check websites
 - Weather Channel - <http://www.weather.com>
 - Washington State Emergency Management Division (click on emergency news) – www.emd.wa.gov
 - Taking Winter by Storm (Puget Sound) - <http://www.govlink.org/STORM/>
 - King County Public Health's Response to Bioterrorism - <http://www.metrokc.gov/health/bioterrorism/>
 - Your county website - <http://emd.wa.gov/site-general/wa-map/wa-state.htm> and click on the county
 - Your TV Station website
 - Your City Public Schools website
- Buddy System

When to Call 9-1-1

- Call 9-1-1 when there is a life threatening DANGER
- Do NOT call 9-1-1 if there is NO danger
- Do NOT call 9-1-1 for information

Understanding the Communication System

- When a disaster happens, the traffic for landline phone system will sharply increase which will cause congestion.
- Don't make local phone calls unless you need to call 9-1-1. Leave phone line open for people to call 9-1-1.
- Regular landline (not cordless) phones work the best during a power outage.
- Call someone out of state and let this person know that you are OK.
- Cell phones and emails via cell phones & pagers may not work.
- Text messaging is the best way to contact people in your area.

Preparing a Communication Plan

- Develop Communication Kit
 - tips on how people can communicate with you
 - tips on how people can guide you
 - paper & pen
 - medical information if needed
- Gesture & Facial Expression
- Write notes
- Buddy System
- Photo Identification Cards
- Important Contact Information
 - phone number for out of state contact person
 - family members (cell phone, pager, work/school phone)
 - important people (friend, neighbor, doctor, priest, etc)

How You Can Help

- Talk with your neighbors, co-workers, families, and friends to make an emergency plan.
 - How and what to communicate with each other?
 - Who checks who?
 - Where to meet?
 - Who does what?
- Develop evacuation plan and practice
- Know what to do before, during and after disaster
- Have supplies ready
- Take emergency preparedness class (Red Cross, Emergency Management, other) or Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) class in your local area.
- Take First Aid and CPR training

For more information, contact Washington State 9-1-1/TTY Education Program at the Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center:

(206) 388-1275 TTY

(206) 323-5770 V,

(206) 328-6871 FAX

206.388.1400 Videophone

Dplatt.hsdh.org IP

dplatt@hsdc.org

Also you can check the website at <http://www.cscdhh.org/911/emergency.htm> (soon to be transferred to <http://www.hsdh.org/911>) to learn more information about emergency notification.

Information on Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC)

By Robert Honan, Executive Director

When people learn I'm the Director of the SILC (State Independent Living Council), they ask, "What is the SILC?" I tell them the SILC is a group of volunteers appointed by the Governor, with me and a part-time assistant to help their efforts. These committed volunteers work to know and address the independent living needs of people with disabilities.

The SILC works with two state agencies, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), not-for-profit Centers for Independent Living (CILs), and other community disability groups. The SILC leads the effort to develop, monitor, evaluate, and update a State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). The SPIL describes relationships with disability groups, sets service goals for CILs, and addresses some key issues like housing, transportation, transition, and emergency preparedness. This is an important activity for the SILC, who finalizes and signs the SPIL, along with the two state agencies.

Other SILC activities include serving as a resource to CILs, preparing annual reports for the federal oversight agency, helping other disability groups, and keeping up-to-date on independent living issues.

The SILC wants community input to help develop the SPIL. We appreciate input at public forums or by individual email, letters, and in person.

You can contact Robert Honan at:

Mailing Address:

PO Box 45343

Olympia, WA 98504

Phone Numbers:

Toll Free: 1-800-624-4105

Local Call: 360-725-3692

Physical Location:

4565 7th Ave SE

Lacey, Washington

Fax: 360-407-3899

Website: www.wasilc.org

National Fire Protection Association issues Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities

March 29, 2007 - A new Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities was developed and issued this month by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The document provides general information to assist in identifying the needs of people with disabilities related to emergency evacuation planning.

The document is a valuable resource for people with disabilities as well as employers, building owners and managers, and others involved in developing emergency evacuation plans. Critical information on the operational, planning, and response elements necessary to develop a well-thought-out plan for evacuating a building or taking other appropriate action in the event of an emergency are covered.

The Emergency Evacuation Planning Guide for People with Disabilities is available for download at no cost from NFPA's Web site, www.nfpa.org/evacuationguide.

To read more, go to:

www.nfpa.org/newsReleaseDetails.asp?categoryId=488&itemId=33659

Visit NFPA's Web site at: www.nfpa.org.

For more information, contact:

Lorraine Carli, NFPA Public Affairs Office at
(617) 984-7275 or lcarli@nfpa.org

SOURCE: NFPA

Do you need ODHH publications in other reading formats or in a foreign language?

Information, Referral and Advocacy Updates

By Ryan Bondroff

ODHH can provide ODHH-related program information in Large Print or Braille format or in a foreign language.

Large Print and Braille Format:

We have new large print brochures on ODHH and Telecommunication Equipment Distribution. For people who request Braille materials, we can provide those brochures and other ODHH related materials as well.

Foreign Language Format:

If you prefer to read ODHH materials in a foreign language such as Spanish, Russian, Chinese, French, etc. We can have ODHH materials translated in any language that meet your language needs.

Please contact Ryan Bondroff to request materials in your preferred foreign language or reading format (large print or Braille) via email at: bondroffryan@dshs.wa.gov or call 1-(800) 422-7930. You can also use Videophone (VP) to contact ODHH. We will complete your request and mail the materials to you.

Back Issues of ODHH Community Review

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has back issues available for anyone who is interested in receiving them. Please contact ODHH at (800) 422-7930 V/TTY or email ODHH@dshs.wa.gov to let us know which newsletter and how many copies you need. We'll be happy to send you those newsletters.

List of Back Issues:

1. Spring 2004, Volume 1, Number 1
2. Fall 2004, Volume 1, Number 2
3. Winter 2005, Volume 2, Number 1
4. Summer 2005, Volume 2, Number 2
5. Fall 2005, Volume 2, Number 3 – Regular and Large Print available
6. Winter 2006, Volume 3, Number 1
7. Summer 2006, Volume 3, Number 2
8. Fall 2006, Volume 3, Number 3



Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Toll Free: 1 (800) 422-7930 V/TTY

(360) 902-8000 Direct

Web site: <http://odhh.dshs.wa.gov>

Contact ODHH by Video at:

VP IP Address: 209.181.93.249

VP#: (360) 902-8000

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Ryan Bondroff, IRA Program Manager bondroffryan@dshs.wa.gov
Emily Hill, SLIM Program Manager hillemily@dshs.wa.gov
Steve Peck, TRS Program Manager pecksc@dshs.wa.gov
Kelly Robison, TED Program Manager robiskd@dshs.wa.gov
Colleen Rozmaryn, ACT Program Manager rozmaic@dshs.wa.gov
Claudia Foy, SHS Program Manager foyclam@dshs.wa.gov

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Olympia, WA 98504

Free Matter
for the Blind
and Physically
Handicapped